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SUBJECT: COMSEC'S DHIA REQUESTS ASSISTANCE TO
ENHANCE FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL COORDINATION

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On April 5, IRMO Director Speckhard met with Secretary General for the Council of Ministers Secretariat (CoMSec) Emad Dhia to discuss the Dhia's request for USG assistance. Dhia emphasized the need for assistance in building up CoMSec's federal provincial coordination capability and stated that the Iraqi Government considers this a significant issue that must be addressed satisfactorily. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) IRMO Director Speckhard met with the ComSec Secretary General Emad Dhia on April 5 at Dhia's

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request. Dhia cited increasingly deteriorating relations between Iraq's central and provincial governments. As an example, Dhia related how provincial officials are seizing federal stores, including foodstuffs, and disrupting national inventory and distribution systems. Dhia also lamented what he considers a lack of constitutional clarity on the division of responsibilities and authorities between the central and provincial governments. Provincial governments, he added, are ignorant about national budget processes that provinces must follow in order to access central government funds allocated for them.

¶3. (SBU) Dhia stressed the linchpin role that the CoMSec must play in the. According to Dhia, Planning Minister Barham Salih agreed to provide Dhia with Planning Ministry expertise, which Dhia said he favors bringing in "to strengthen CoMSec's center of mass." The Planning Ministry, Dhia explained, is set to begin a program to bring provincial leaders to Baghdad to discuss the National Development Strategy (NDS) and to help them devise provincial development strategies tied to the NDS. In addition, Dhia said, the Planning Ministry is ready to link this program to CoMSec efforts to improve federal relations. Dhia said he would like to expand this program in order to strengthen the CoMSec's ties to the Governors.

¶4. (SBU) Dhia thanked Mission for providing him with an advisor to build capacity in his immediate office, but he stressed his need for significant additional USG assistance to close the center-provincial gap. Dhia said he wants USG assistance to help him craft a strategic plan of action "road map" and specific programs, which include building local governance capacity in order to improve

provincial/federal relations. First, Dhia requested technical assistance to conduct a diagnostic of the CoMSec. Second, he asked for advisers to help him set up sectoral committees, such as in energy. He expressed a preference for Iraqi-American advisers and wants them to twin with existing staff in a mentoring relationship.

15. (SBU) Mission explained its willingness to assist CoMSec in strengthening its capacity as part of its larger national capacity development initiative. (NOTE: The UK Department for International Development (DFID) operates a contractor within the CoMSec to work on improving CoMSec operational capability. Mission is coordinating its efforts closely with DFID. END NOTE.)

KHALILZAD